

Dear Human Services Committee,

I am writing this and testifying today to thank you for putting on your agenda for discussion:  
\*H.B. No. 5440 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DIABETES PREVENTION AND SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATION SERVICES.

I am a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator with over 30 years of caring for people with diabetes. It is unfortunate that some of the most vulnerable citizens in the state, those on Medicaid do not have access or coverage of diabetes self-management education from nationally recognized programs offered throughout the state. I work with a health care team that puts the person with diabetes at the center of the team that consists of their primary care provider, endocrinologist if needed, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses and dietitians who are certified diabetes educators. We also have available a social worker and lifestyle modification coach.

The diabetes self-management education program that I work in has been awarded recognition by the American Diabetes Association in accordance with national standards for diabetes self-management education programs. This is the Gold standard for diabetes education and we know we get results. In a recent review 82% of our patients lowered their HbA1c by an average of about 2% within 6 months after attending our diabetes education workshops. Diabetes Self-Management Education is so important to assist the patient with following through with their management plan prescribed by their provider, IE. taking medications as ordered, injecting insulin correctly, appropriate dosing of insulin, home glucose monitoring, meal planning, meeting exercise goals, healthy coping with diabetes as a chronic life-long disease, understanding and recognizing acute and chronic complications of diabetes, the list goes on. Diabetes Educators are specially trained to coach patients to learning to live a healthy life without complications of diabetes. As we know the complications of diabetes including blindness, loss of limbs, heart disease, nerve damage and kidney disease can lead to a poor quality of life not to mention the health care financial burden.

I am aware of the limited diabetes education programs offered through FQHC and they have excellent staff. However it is unlikely that their limited resources would meet the needs of all Medicaid participants with diabetes seeking out diabetes education. Often the primary care providers in these centers refer to our endocrinologists as the patient requires more intensive management which leads to more intensive diabetes education. It is rare that a primary care provider will introduce a patient to intensive diabetes management using insulin pumps or continuous glucose sensing technologies. As a CDE, I have the training and expertise to assist these patients in learning how to use these technologies and with optimizing their blood sugar control. Recently a patient of ours was told by their primary care provider that their A1c percentage (average blood glucose over the last 3 months) was perfect (6.3% which indicates an average blood sugar of about 130 mg/dl) and that he was in perfect glucose control. However, the average blood sugar doesn't give the full picture. When the patient met with an RN/CDE colleague of mine it was discovered that while his average blood sugar was excellent he had excursions of his blood sugar from less than 70 mg/dl (hypoglycemia) to more than 300mg/dl (hyperglycemia). This up and down pattern of blood sugars was discovered on a continuous glucose sensor first interpreted by my colleague. Both very low and very high blood sugars can be life-threatening.

People with diabetes on Medicaid should have available to them all of the medical resources and health education that is required by all other payers in the state. For all of these reasons and those from others who are appearing before you today as well as other written testimony I

am asking for your support and action for this bill. I appreciate your time and attention. If I can answer any of your questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Regards,

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